

I SING OF A MAIDEN



A Carol for Mixed Choir (SATB)

Phillip A. Cooke

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(2016, rev. 2024)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- All breath marks have been left at the discretion of the conductor.
- The *mmm* sound is a resonant humming sound, perhaps with a slightly open mouth if necessary to create a fuller sound.
- The solos can be taken by more singers if necessary.

I sing of a maiden was first performed on the 07 December 2016 by the Choir of King's College, Aberdeen at St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, UK

Duration: 4 minutes

Cover photograph: *The Annunciation*, Sofia Moroz

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

TEXT

I sing of a maiden
That is matchless,
King of all kings
For her son she chose.

He came as still
Where his mother was
As dew in April
That falls on the grass.

He came as still
To his mother's bower
As dew in April

That falls on the flower.

He came as still
Where his mother lay
As dew in April
That falls on the spray.

Mother and maiden
There was never, ever one but she;
Well may such a lady
God's mother be.

Anon.

PROGRAMME NOTE

I sing of a maiden, is a simple setting of the beautiful medieval lyric poem on the Annunciation. The text has been set by some of the leading twentieth and twenty-first century composers, and with the simplicity and stillness of the poem it is easy to understand why. My setting takes the serenity of the text and works it through the different sections. The work is in an ABBBA form with the opening alto solo returning in two guises at the end: firstly in a jubilant full choir harmonisation, then a soft reprise of the opening.

There is an emotional duality in the text of *I sing of a maiden* that I tried to capture in my setting: on the one hand there is rapture of the Annunciation and all that entails, but there is also the delicacy and introversion of the Virgin Mary at this critical moment. I wanted to capture some of this introversion and at the same time pay homage to great carols of the early twentieth century that do the same – Peter Warlock’s *Bethlehem Down* and Herbert Howells’s *A Spotless Rose* – I hope in some part to have done this.

PAC

I SING OF A MAIDEN

for Mixed Choir (SATB)

ANON., MEDIEVAL

PHILLIP A. COOKE (2016, rev. 2024)

Tempo flessibile (♩ = c.50)

pp
*mmm mmm

Solo *p espress.*
I sing of a maiden That is match-less, King of all kings For her son

(altri) *pp*
*mmm mmm

pp
*mmm mmm

pp
*mmm mmm

* See preface for more information.

5

poco rit. **Adagio sostenuto** (♩ = c.50)

pp teneramente *p*
He came as still Where his mother was, as still Where his mother

she chose.

pp teneramente *p*
He came as still Where his mother was, as still Where his mother

pp teneramente *p*
He came as still Where his mother was, as still Where his mother

pp teneramente *p*
He came as still Where his mother was, as still Where his mother

poco rit.

pp

3

9

was As dew in Apr - il That falls on the grass.

(tutti)

was As dew in Apr - il That falls on the grass.

was As dew in Apr - il That falls on the grass.

(altri)

was As dew in Apr - il That falls on the grass.

Solo *p espress.*

I sing of a mai - den

A tempo (♩ = c.50)

13

p He came as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, As

p He came as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, As

p He came as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, As

p He came as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, as still to his mo - ther's bow - er, As

18 *pp*

dew in Apr - il That falls on the flow - er. He came as

dew in Apr - il That falls on the flow - er. He came as

(altri) *pp*

dew in Apr - il That falls on the flow - er. He came as

Solo *p espress.*

I sing of a mai - den

(tutti) *pp*

dew in Apr - il That falls on the flow - er. He came as

22 *mf* *pp* *mf* *p*

still Where his mo - ther lay, as still Where his mo - ther lay, As

mf *pp* *mf* *p*

still Where his mo - ther lay, as still Where his mo - ther lay, As

(tutti) *mf* *pp* *mf* *p*

still Where his mo - ther lay, as still Where his mo - ther lay, As

mf *pp* *mf* *p*

still Where his mo - ther lay, as still Where his mo - ther lay, As

poco rit.

poco più mosso (♩ = c.60)

5

26

Solo *p espress.*

I sing of a mai - den
dew in Apr - il That falls on the spray. Moth - er and mai - den
dew in Apr - il That falls on the spray. Moth - er and mai - den
dew in Apr - il That falls on the spray. Moth - er and mai - den
dew in Apr - il That falls on the spray. Moth - er and mai - den

rit.

(tutti)

30

There was ne - ver, ev - er one but she; Well may such a la - dy God's moth - er be.
There was ne - ver, ev - er one but she; Well may such a la - dy God's moth - er be.
There was ne - ver, ev - er one but she; Well may such a la - dy God's moth - er be.
There was ne - ver, ev - er one but she; Well may such a la - dy God's moth - er be.

34

A - men. *pp* *mmm mmm

Solo *p espress.*

I sing of a mai - den That is match - less, King of all kings.

(altri) *pp*

A - men. *mmm mmm

A - men. *pp* *mmm mmm

A - men. *pp* *mmm mmm

A - men. *pp* *mmm mmm



rit.

38

For her son she chose.